

I, like millions of other Americans, am subjected to virtually thousands of telemarketing calls per year. Last year I kept a 6 month record and received, on average, 15 calls per day. I finally purchased a Telezapper which may or may not be helping- I am still receiving 8 to 15 calls per day.

(As I write this I received a telemarketing call on my cellular phone and the woman refused to accept that I did not wish to use my minutes on her call. I was forced to be rude and hang up on her)

Regardless of its effectiveness, when the telephone rings and the Telezapper is asked to send its tone, I still have the inconvenience of looking at the caller id to see if the caller is 'unknown', determining whether or not it might be my lawyer or some other person I might want to talk with and I still must listen to the ringing until it is answered. My answering machine then comes on telling the caller that my line will not accept blocked calls. I must listen to this message over and over as well. I do receive, and wish to receive, calls from professionals whose offices utilize a multi-line switch. These calls, as well as many cellular calls, show on a caller id as 'unknown'. The inconvenience amplifies the assault upon my privacy.

I would like to propose a simple plan for your consideration:

Step One: Require all telemarketing calls to be made from a licensed telephone. Presumably this license would come from the FCC, though the FTC may be the lead- I do not know. This allows for several benefits:

- a) Creates revenue; The revenue derived from these licenses should be substantial and will serve to ensure a higher level of compliance- certainly as a deterrent for non-compliance. Also, it would provide the governing authority the financial backing to vigorously enforce compliance with the laws.
- b) Firms which pay the fees for each line can be more readily considered credible and legitimate telemarketing agencies;
- c) Prevents a telemarketer from taking a list home and calling from there, or from calling on a listed number so that 'unknown' will not be displayed.
- d) Creates the opportunity for Step Two

Step Two: Require all licensed telemarketing telephones to emit an identifiable and unique tone, whether the call is initiated by a person or a computer.. This will allow the consumer to purchase a box, along the lines of the Telezapper, which intercepts that tone and, if set to the 'intercept' position, doesn't allow the telephone to even ring. If not set to 'intercept', the consumer's telephone will ring through. The benefits of this:

- a) Simply because 'unknown' displays on a caller id does not indicate that the call is possibly unwanted.
- b) Regulates the telemarketing firm (the intruder), NOT the consumer (the victim)
- c) The consumer retains some semblance of privacy and choice, without unwanted solicitation.
- d) Consumer confidence in the fact that the telemarketing calls they do receive (if that is their choice) are from licensed, regulated and known (to the FCC, FTC) firms. Scam artists are being deterred.

Step Three: Impose stiff fines for any (licensed) telemarketers calling from an unlicensed telephone. This would be a considerable asset in identifying legitimate telemarketers and separating out the scam artists. A telemarketing call which gets through the intercept box is either a scam or is, as a telemarketing solicitation, illegal. Period

In summary, this plan which, if implemented, would:

- 1) create revenue from the telemarketers,
- 2) eliminate the ring on the telephone if an unwanted telemarketing call comes in
- 3) permit non-telemarketing companies which utilize switching devices, and therefore display as 'unknown', to have a call received
- 4) permit each individual the opportunity to decide whether or not they even want to be bothered by solicitations. Many people do and will not block the calls ("A lot of people say they don't like telemarketing, but last year 185 million purchases were made through a telemarketer," said Matt Mattingley, a spokesman for the American Teleservices) \*Knight Ridder/Miami Herald 9/26/02
- 5) NOT require adding ones name to a database of 'do not call' names- a database which would have to be added to for each telephone line one might have, will have to be maintained and which in an of itself is the ultimate master calling list if a hacker ever got into it. What a prize.